

into my pants.
I struggle there in elemental anger, on the floor.
Finally I get them on, I stand up, button myself.
The nurse comes in
and gives me a tetanus shot in the shoulder.

I get angry. I am no longer a prisoner.
I give her shit about giving me the shot
in the shoulder where it hurts more
than in the back of the arm.
She is stunned that a patient has addressed
her directly.

She blinks.
My blood pressure is outlandish
and I finish dressing, get my glasses back on,
go out to the waiting room
and meet my husband.

We go out the glass door,
walk through the parking lot
and drive home. I am out. Still kicking.
I left the bandage on 3 days
and then tore it off, took a shower,
and put a bandaid on.
I pulled the stitches out myself after a week.
I healed up real good.

Freedom.

IT RAINS IN NEWPORT, OREGON

First time I have been through Newport, Oregon.
Dirt parking lot above wharf front. Two P.M.
We park facing the harbor
and eat hot fish and chips
gazing out over fog and rain in harbor,
green painted bridge up to right.

Afterwards I walked around the parking lot.
Found a large beef stew bone with hole through.
It is bleached very white but is still dense.
There is some dog shit, trodden down beach grass,
wild flowers, dark sand, a trail leading off.
I find a bent piece of somebody's
discarded home movie filmstrip,
black and white, it is of two little girls
standing in front of a livingroom tv.
maybe they are in costumes, dancing.

All the fishermen here are about 20 years old,
wear dirty blue levis, knit caps
and hooded sweatshirts.
Looking for a mystical sign in Newport.

I found nothing of note.
The Sears in town was one room of new washing machines.
And every other person drove a pickup.

NINE LIVES

The day we got married
I was terrified that my hands would tremble.
What happened was that I had to pee
about a hundred times
before we got in to the Judge's chambers,
got 5 minutes of sincerity, a marriage certificate,
and walked out hysterical, man and wife.
The next day we had a reception at my mother's
and I wore this yellow Joseph Magnin's dress
which made me look uptight with a corsage
and all my relatives came, drank all the liquor,
took pictures, examined every living thing
in the place, cut pieces of cake for themselves
and dropped crumbs down their Sunday suits
and flower print dresses.

We took off for Santa Rosa, cut the baby buggy off
the back of the car down in Richmond on the way to the
San Rafael Bridge approach,
and drove to a motel in Santa Rosa
where we took showers, I had a headache from the whisky,
we didn't make love. We watched tv.
My mother wanted me to have a Church wedding
but I backed out about 2 weeks before the arrangement,
and she never figured out what happened after that.
I never did anything right.
But it was fun knowing I had come out alive anyway.

On the second night of our honeymoon
we stayed at the old Gualala Hotel south of Mendocino
which has a great large woodfloored bar with nobody
in it except pictures of elk and hunting photos.
Not even a bartender. The bathroom was communal
and it cost 7 dollars for the 2 of us.
When we got back to San Francisco
it was cold and foggy and my brother hadn't
let the cat out in 4 days.

-- Carol Thrift

Long Beach CA